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**Before the
Federal Communications Commission
Washington, D.C. 20554**

**In the Matter of
Proposal for Creation of the Low Power FM
(LPFM) Broadcast Service FCC RM-9242**

To: Federal Communications Commission

Reply-Comments of Walter Mathews

I am replying mainly to the comments of the National Association of Broadcasters. I believe that some form of low power radio broadcasting is needed to add to the diversity of view points presented through the radio spectrum. An underlying and perhaps false assumption made by about broadcasting historically is that larger commercial stations better serve the public interest.

The NAB maintains that current power levels best serve the public interest. They note that many people listen to radio in cars or outside the home (NAB Comments, p.5). Low power stations would not be able to serve the entire community. That is exactly why low power broadcast is so vital to a democracy. Political subdivisions, do not conform to the contours of broadcast stations. Low power stations would draw on a specific, targeted geographic area. Issues important in one political subdivision, may not be important in another. A full power commercial broadcaster has an economic incentive to serve a much larger community (listenership equates with profits), and a disincentive to serve small political subdivisions.

The NAB points out that the FCC has rejected local program origination on FM translators (NAB Comments, p. 7). This point would seem to argue against other points made by the NAB. FM translators apparently cause no interference with other stations. At least from a technical standpoint what is carried (either local origination, or another station's signal) would seem to make little difference. Low power broadcasting (in this case translator stations) is possible and has been working. This also would seem to argue against NAB's contention that the FM band is too crowded for low power broadcast (NAB Comments, p. 13). They list the number of full power stations, but not the number of translator stations and or the number of possible additional translator stations.

Ironically, the NAB comments that Docket 80-90 dramatically increased the number of FM radio stations, and caused "severe economic and financial stress on the fragmented radio marketplace (NAB Comments, p. 27)." The FCC then changed its local and national ownership rules. The title of the section is "Adding a new service would likely decrease the overall service to the public." There is no mention of how the overall service to the public was

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harm by Docket 80-90. We have a statement of economic harm and stress to the "radio marketplace," but no mention of the harm to the public. One has to wonder if the NAB views harm to the "radio marketplace" as harm to the public.

To add even more irony, despite the changes made by Docket 80-90, the NAB has recently released a report praising its public service record. In Bringing Community Service Home (NAB, April 1998), the Association reports that it contributes 6.85 billion dollars in Public Service. By its own account, the Association seems to be saying that the current structure of broadcasting is doing exemplary public service. If Docket 80-90 caused such trauma, how are broadcasters able to provide such public service now? How could low power stations affect this dedication to public service, even if they do fragment the radio marketplace? Since many people listen to radio in cars and away from home (NAB Comments, p. 5), how could low power stations dramatically fragment the radio marketplace? One is tempted to say that additional stations do not seem to impact the public interest using the NAB's own documents.

Finally, it is gratifying to note the NAB's concern with the FCC's workload. It would seem, however, that the Commission is better suited to determine and balance its administrative burdens against the public interest needs of the country.

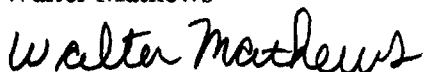
In summary, then, the points I have covered from the NAB's comments seem to argue for rather than against the establishment of a new low power broadcast service. There is little in the points that I have covered that forecloses the possibility of low power broadcast.

- 1) Low power broadcast poses little threat to commercial broadcasters (many people listen in cars or outside of the home).
- 2) Even if the radio marketplace is fragmented, broadcasters will continue to serve the public interest (even docket 80-90 has not prevented broadcasters from performing exemplary public service).
- 3) Low power stations pose some interference threat (translator stations are no threat)

Taken together, low power stations offer the commission the opportunity to approve a new service, give a radio voice to classes of people not represented, and provide the public with a greater diversity of viewpoints at little cost to the public interest or harm to current broadcasters.

Respectfully submitted

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I, Walter Mathews, do hereby certify that a true and correct copy of the foregoing "Reply-Comments on RM-9242" was sent via first class mail, this 22nd day of May, 1998, to the following parties:

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